

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus for making gray-scale images ~~by performing at least one operation selected from the group consisting of: a manipulation of a plurality of dots arranged in matrix form, a single dot-based density adjustment, and a single dot-based size adjustment~~, said image forming apparatus comprising:

a dot status detector configured to detect an occurrence in which a dot exists at a focus dot position and no dot exists at both positions immediately adjacent to the focus dot position in the main scanning direction; and

a density adjuster configured to convert a writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a first value when the dot status detector detects the occurrence and to convert the writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a second value, different from the first value, when the dot status detector does not detect the occurrence.

2. (Original) The image forming apparatus as defined in Claim 1, further comprising:

a dot phase adjuster configured to expand the dot in a direction right of a center of the dot when the dot status detector detects the occurrence and configured to expand the dot in a direction left of the center of the dot when the dot status detector does not detect the occurrence.

3-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus for making gray-scale images ~~by performing at least one operation selected from the group consisting of a manipulation of~~

~~a plurality of dots arranged in matrix form, a single dot based density adjustment, and a single dot based size adjustment~~, said image forming apparatus comprising:

dot status detecting means for detecting an occurrence in which a dot exists at a focus dot position and no dot exists at both positions immediately adjacent the focus dot position in the main scanning direction; and

density adjusting means for converting a writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a first value when the dot status detecting means detects the occurrence and for converting the writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a second value, different from the first value, when the dot status detecting means does not detect the occurrence.

8. (Original) The image forming apparatus as defined in Claim 7, further comprising:

dot phase adjusting means for expanding the dot in a direction right of a center of the dot when the dot status detecting means detects the occurrence and for expanding the dot in a direction left of the center of dot when the dot status detecting means does not detect the occurrence.

9-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for forming gray-scale images ~~by performing at least one operation selected from the group consisting of: a manipulation of a plurality of dots arranged in matrix form, a single dot based density adjustment, and a single dot based size adjustment~~, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting whether an occurrence exists in which a dot exists at a focus dot position and no dot exists at both positions immediately adjacent the focus dot position in the main scanning direction; and

converting a writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to make a smooth gray-scale transition to a first level when the detecting step detects the occurrence; and

converting the writing level of the dot at the focus dot position to a second value different from the first value, when the detecting step does not detect the occurrence.

14. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 13, further comprising the step of: expanding the dot in a direction right of a center of the dot when the detecting step detects the occurrence, and expanding the dot in a direction left of the center of the dot when the detecting step does not detect the occurrence.

15-18. (Canceled)